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SUBJECT: ESTONIA: EMBASSY ROUNDTABLE PROMOTES IPR IN  
NATIONAL CURRICULUM

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On February 6, the Embassy hosted a groundbreaking roundtable bringing together government, NGOs and academia on "How to Raise IPR Awareness in Schools." The roundtable was organized in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and demonstrated the AMCHAM's increased interest in lobbying the government of Estonia (GOE) for stronger IPR protection and education. The discussion focused on threats to Estonia's competitiveness if it does not make IPR a priority at the grass roots level. The event resulted in concrete proposals for incorporating IPR in the national educational curriculum and getting IPR educational materials to students. Post's role in this event furthered one of the Department's and our core MSP goals of Promoting Economic Growth and Prosperity. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) AMCHAM Estonia's IPR Committee includes representatives from the business sector, the Embassy and a number of NGOs in the copyright and trademark protection field. The committee invited key stakeholders, including the Deputy Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Research; the head of the Ministry of Culture's IPR Division; Advisors from Estonia's "Tiger Leap" Foundation (a national program to improve education by utilizing modern IT and communication); the Program Director of the E-governance Academy; and a teacher from one of the most high-tech schools in Tallinn to participate. A Member of Parliament moderated the two-hour discussion.

¶3. (U) In her opening remarks, the Charge d'Affaires stressed the role of IPR as a key component of an innovative and competitive economy. She also emphasized the importance of international cooperation in this field. Moderator and Reform Party MP Hannes Astok discussed the current state of IPR education in the schools, IPR awareness among teachers and students and the availability of teaching materials related to IPR in Estonia. The discussion indicated that overall IPR awareness in schools is low. The subject is not included in the national curriculum, and there are no standardized teaching materials available. While Estonian schools do verify IT licensing compliance, they do not have internal policies on copyright and other IP issues.

¶4. (U) Participants agreed that promoting understanding of IPR is critical for Estonia's efforts to shift to a knowledge-based economy and to strengthen its competitive position in Europe. While teachers do not feel that special IPR classes would be effective, the Deputy Under Secretary of Education proposed including IPR in the national curriculum as a cross-disciplinary item. Each class having any relation to trademarks, patents or copyrights would cover relevant aspects of

IPR. All participants agreed that cooperation between the public and private sectors is crucial to effectively introducing IPR to the Estonian school system. The AMCHAM Committee volunteered to develop an IPR toolkit for teachers that the Ministry of Education can pre-load on 6,000 laptops they plan to distribute to teachers nationwide later this year.

15. (U) Comment. This roundtable was a significant step in AMCHAM's growing activism on the IPR issue, and the first in a series of activities they plan to do over the next few months. It was very successful not only in bringing together key decision makers, but also by including industry representatives (such as Microsoft and the Business Software Alliance) who have the know-how and the resources to promote IPR education in Estonia. The discussion to include IPR in the national curriculum is a big step forward for enhancing awareness of the importance of IPR protection in Estonia, and increasing the country's competitiveness.

By hosting and supporting the event, post furthered one of the Department's and our core MSP goals of Promoting Economic Growth and Prosperity.

PHILLIPS